Headquarters Military Traffic Management Command
News Release
MTMC Command Affairs Office
200 Stovall St., Room 11N57
Alexandria, VA 22332
Voice (703) 428-2464 e-mail: randtj@mtmc.army.mil
For more information, contact: John Randt

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Transporters complete complex NTC rail move

By Larry D. McCaskill
Public Affairs Specialist
Deployment Support Command

Deployment Support Command transporters say it was the most complex rail movements to the National Training Center in a decade.

Over 1,500 railroad cars from many locations had to be synchronized through to the center at Fort Irwin, near Barstow, Calif.

The Deployment Support Command accomplished the mission – and moved the rail cars into position two days ahead of schedule. The return trip was accomplished five days ahead of schedule.

"In spite of the magnitude and the tight schedule of this rotation, I believe it was one of the smoothest ones I have worked on in my 12 years here at the National Training Center," said Victoria Wagstaffe, lead freight rate specialist in the center's freight branch.

MTMC's warfighter customers who benefited in the movement included the 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Carson, Col.

Normally, units deploying to the National Training Center use prepositioned equipment located at Fort Irwin, said Wagstaffe. In this rotation, however, warfighters brought more than 2,850 pieces of their own equipment.

This added equipment more than doubled the normal 300-350 railcars move to some 750-800.

Coupled with the simultaneous departure of two other large deployments, the capacity of Marine Corps Logistics Base, Yermo, Calif., was put to a maximum test. Located 30 miles from the training center, the Marine Corps base has a maximum capacity of 720 rail cars but a much smaller working capacity.

In order to ensure a smooth flow of equipment and rail cars, a hard-driving Deployment Support Command team worked at Fort Hood, Fort Carson, Fort Irwin and the Marine Corps Logistics Base.

The team, of Maureen Carlo, Darius Clarke, Arlene Beard and Brian Rivera, assisted ail operations and cargo documentation. Each of the team members worked at one or more of the installations and, later, on the equipment return in the last three weeks of April.

"I remember wearing that uniform and I could relate to how the soldiers felt, said Clarke. "I wanted to do everything I could to make things as smooth and easy as possible."

The deployment had high visibility on its own merits. An infantry and aviation brigade from the 4th Infantry Division were using the exercise as a demonstration of new battlefield technology. The soldiers used equipment enhanced with computers, Internet-connected radios and satellite-fed global positioning systems.

"We stayed on top of this one very closely," said Evert Bono, Chief, Negotiations Division.

"We wanted to ensure the warfighter was not delayed in any way."

The transporters were able to leverage technology by taking advantage of the railroad's electronic data interchange, or R-EDI system.

"It allowed us to document the movement of the trains out of Fort Irwin a lot faster than normal," said Carlo, a traffic management specialist who coordinates National Training Center rotations.

The electronic data interchange, or R-EDI, is an electronic way-billing program developed for the nation's commercial railroads by the Association of American Railroads.

The electronic system gives instant information to the originating railroad and all interlining railroads that a train is on their lines. As a result, railroads were able to pull the trains earlier than if they had waited for the normal process.

"Using the R-EDI system was very advantageous," said Carlo. "We were able to satisfy our customers' requirements and get the equipment redeployed in a timely fashion."

Warfighters praised the deployment.

"The Deployment Support Command and the use of the R-EDI system made all the difference in the world," said Maj. Gary Franklin, Division Transportation Officer, 4th Infantry Division.

Warfighters provided data to the Deployment Support Command team for loading into the system, said Franklin. This provided timely rail movement and eliminated delays caused by the preparation of paperwork.

"It's always beautiful to watch a plan unfold so smoothly," said Franklin.

Key rail operations actions were performed by Army Reservists from the 1394thDeployment Support Brigade, Camp Pendleton, Calif., and the 1205th Railway Operating Battalion, Middletown, Conn. Both units are aligned with the Deployment Support Command.

A seven-man team from the 1394th ensured all rail car tie downs were correct. The 1205th provided an engineer and a brakeman which allowed for extended rail operations work hours.

"(The Reservists) eased a lot of the normal strain and their being here was money well spent," said Franklin.

The operation was a prime example of team effort, said Carlo.

"We provided the kind of customer service that is expected from MTMC by doing what we do best – getting the equipment where it needed to be and getting it there on time.

(The article included information from an American Forces Press Service release by Spec. Johnny A. Thompson, 4th Public Affairs Detachment, Fort Hood, Texas.)

CAPTION

More than 1,500 railcars were loaded and offloaded simultaneously to make the rail movements a success.